

Message Text

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USICA

EO 11652: N/A
SUBJECT: CULTURAL PLAN FOR 1979

REFS: (A)USICA 16236,(B)USICA 16225,(C)ARNOLD/ALEXANDER
TELCON 7/13/78

1. PAO MET WITH MFA CULTURAL DIRECTOR DR.MERKEL JULY 19 TO
DISCUSS GDR DELAYS IN NOMINATING CANDIDATES FOR
MULTI-REGIONAL PROJECTS, ESPECIALLY SYRACUSE TV PROJECT;
TO ARRANGE FOR MEETING WITH EBERHARD PANITZ, WRITERS UNION
CANDIDATE FOR IOWA WRITERS PROJECT; AND TO PRESENT U.S.
PROPOSALS FOR 1979 CULTURAL PLAN.

2. MULTI-REGIONAL PROJECTS: PAO POINTED OUT THAT ALL
EARLIER INDICATIONS FROM GDR HAD INDICATED FORWARD MOVEMENT
IN EXCHANGE PROGRAMS, THAT CONSEQUENTLY EMBASSY HAD PLANNED
FOR EXPANSION IN NEXT TWO YEARS BUT THAT EXTREME DELAYS IN
NOMINATING CANDIDATES FOR INDIANA JOURNALISTS AND
SYRACUSE TV PROJECTS, DESPITE EARLIER ACCEPTANCE BOTH PRO-
GRAMS, HAD NOT MET DEADLINES AND CREATED DILEMMA. MERKEL
RESPONDED WITH CONCERN THAT PLANS FOR NEXT YEAR MIGHT BE
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AFFECTED BY GDR LACK OF COORDINATION FOR THESE TWO PRO-
JECTS AND SAID HE WOULD IMMEDIATELY DISCUSS BACKGROUND
AND REASONS WITH MFA PRESS DIRECTOR MEYER. MERKEL SAID
HE DEEPLY REGRETTEED THESE CROSSED SIGNALS AND UNDERSTOOD
PROBLEM IT POSED FOR EMBASSY.

3. WRITERS PROJECT: PAO SAID PROMPT NOMINATION

OF EBERHARD PANITZ FOR WRITERS PROJECT WAS EXAMPLE OF GOOD COOPERATION AND EXPRESSED HOPE THAT PANITZ' ENGLISH LANGUAGE CAPABILITY ADEQUATE TO PROJECT, DURING WHICH HE EXPECTED GIVE LECTURE. NOTE-TAKER FRAU ELM SAID SHE HAD BEEN ASSURED BY WRITERS UNION THAT PANITZ' ENGLISH MET PREREQUISITE. PAO ASKED THAT MEETING BE ARRANGED WITH PANITZ ASAP.

4. CULTURAL PLAN: PAO SAID ON BASIS OF ADMONITION BY MFA US AFFAIRS CHIEF DR. GEYER TO MAKE 1979 PROPOSALS AT EARLIEST OPPORTUNITY, EMBASSY NOW WISHED TABLE A CULTURAL PLAN FOR NEXT YEAR, AS FOLLOWS:

"REFLECTIONS USA" EXHIBIT TO BE MOUNTED AT THE CENTRALLY-LOCATED EXHIBIT HALL OF THE EAST BERLIN TV TOWER; A LITERARY SEMINAR BETWEEN ONE OR MORE PROMINENT AMERICAN WRITERS AND GDR COUNTERPARTS; THEATRICAL WORKSHOPS AND SEMINARS CONDUCTED BY ACTORS STUDIO DIRECTOR LEE STRASBERG, OR IF NOT AVAILABLE LAMAMA DIRECTOR ELLEN STUART; ONE OR MORE CONCERTS BY EITHER THE CLEVELAND ORCHESTRA OR THE NEW YORK KAMMERMUSIKER.

5. MERKEL WELCOMED EVERY PROPOSAL AND SAID THE PLAN REPRESENTED A COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAM OF CULTURAL EXCHANGE WHICH WOULD BE GREETED POSITIVELY BY HIS GOVERNMENT. HE SAID THE "REFLECTIONS" WAS NEW TO HIM AND ASKED FOR SOME LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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DESCRIPTION, WHICH WAS THEN PROVIDED. HE WAS ALSO TOLD, AND FRAU ELM CONFIRMED, THAT MATERIALS ON THE EXHIBIT HAD BEEN SUBMITTED OVER A YEAR AGO TO DR. BETTIN, AND THAT THE MFA HAD ALREADY AGREED TO THE EXHIBIT, BUT WITHOUT FIXING A TIME OR SITE. MERKEL ACCEPTED THE EXPLANATION, AND WENT ON TO COMMENT ON EACH PROPOSAL: AMERICAN WRITERS, PARTICULARLY IF THEIR WORKS WERE KNOWN IN THE GDR, WOULD BE ESPECIALLY WELCOME, AND IF DESIRED PUBLIC READINGS OF THEIR WORKS WOULD BE ARRANGED; GDR THEATRE WAS ALWAYS IN SEARCH OF NEW IDEAS AND TECHNIQUES AND SOMEONE AS RESPECTED IN THE FIELD AS STRASBERG SEEMED LIKE A GOOD IDEA(MERKEL ADMITTED NOT KNOWING STRASBERG BUT WAS GIVEN A RUNDOWN ON HIM AS WELL AS NAMES OF PROMINENT ACTORS STUDIO ALUMNI, SUCH AS MARLON BRANDO); THE CLEVELAND ORCHESTRA WOULD BE AN UNFORGETTABLE EVENT FOR THE GDR IF POSSIBLE, HOW DID IT STAND AT PRESENT.

6. PAO EXPLAINED THAT THE GDR KUENSTLERAGEN-TUR CONSIDERED IT UNLIKELY THAT THE FEES ASKED BY THE CLEVELAND ORCHESTRA COULD BE MET, AND ALSO INFORMED MERKEL AND ELM OF THE SUBSTANCE OF USICA 16184. PAO SAID KAMMERMUSIKER WAS POSSIBLE REPLACEMENT AND COULD

PROBABLY BE FITTED INTO EAST BERLIN CULTURAL
FESTIVAL, TO WHICH MERKEL AGREED.

7. PAO THEN USED OCCASION TO INFORM MERKEL OF TWO ADDI-
TIONAL DEVELOPMENTS: THE SUCCESSFUL NEGOTIATION WITH THE
KUENSTLERAGENTUR OF THE ENGAGEMENT OF L.A. JUBILEE
SINGERS FOR MAY 24-31 PERIOD IN SIX CITIES, ONE OF WHICH
PUTS THEM IN DRESDEN MUSIC FESTIVAL; AND THE MINISTRY OF
CULTURE-APPROVED ICA GRANT FOR PETER ULBRICH, DIRECTOR

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OF GDR COLLEGE OF FILM AND TELEVISION, FOLLOWING
AIRLIE HOUSE CONFERENCE IN SEPTEMBER. NEITHER MERKEL NOR
ELM WERE AWARE OF EITHER PROGRAM AND BOTH EXPRESSED PLEA-
SURE THAT EACH HAD BEEN SUCCESSFULLY NEGOTIATED. MERKEL
SAID SPIRITUALS AND GOSPEL SONGS WERE VERY POPULAR IN THE
GDR AND PREDICTED A WARM WELCOME FOR THE JUBILEE SINGERS,
AND COMMENTED THAT MEDIA SPECIALISTS SUCH AS ULBRICH WOULD
BENEFIT GRATELY FROM TRAVEL AND EXPOSURE IN THE UNITED
STATES. MERKEL CONCLUDED BY SAYING THAT THE MFA WOULD GIVE
PROMPT CONSIDERATION TO ALL THE PROPOSALS.

8. COMMENT: TAKEN TOGETHER WITH THE LEIPZIG SPRING FAIR
ICA EXHIBIT, THE IREX PROGRAM AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE
PENDING AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE GDR AND US ACADEMIES OF
SCIENCES, THE FOREGOING REPRESENTS A FORMIDABLE CULTURAL
PROGRAM FOR 1979 WHICH WILL EXCEED THE SCOPE OF THIS
YEAR. IT WILL ALSO PROVIDE OFFICIAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR
EMBASSY OFFICERS TO ESCORT AND TRAVEL IN AR NDIF THE GDR

WHERE WE HAVE FEWER CONTACTS. RIDING THE CREST OF THE GOOD-

WILL WAVE GENERATED BY THE RECEPTION FOR THE DRESDEN
EXHIBIT IN WASHINGTON, WE HOPE TO RECEIVE MFA APPROVAL
FOR THE PROPOSALS. ONLY ONE, THE "REFLECTIONS USA" EXHIBIT
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MAY NOT BE REALIZED IN 1979, BASED ON A CONVERSATION DURING
THE JULY 4 RECEPTION THE PAO HELD WITH DR. MERTINK,
SECRETARY OF THE KULTURBUND, WHO SAID THAT THE TV TOWER
IS ALREADY FULLY BOOKED IN 1979 BECAUSE OF OBSERVANCES
OF THE GDR'S 30TH ANNIVERSARY. IF SO, THE EMBASSY
RECOMMENDS HOLDING OUT UNTIL EARLY 1980, SINCE THE TV
TOWER IS THE MOST DESIRABLE SITE FROM THE STANDPOINT OF
VISIBILITY AND PRESENCE. ALEXANDER

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